

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 3

THE NEW YORK TIMES
10 October 1981

U.S. Accuses Soviet of 'Disinformation'

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 9 — The State Department accused the Soviet Union today of using forgery, "disinformation" and blackmail "to discredit and weaken the United States and other nations."

The accusation was contained in a four-page special report made public today. The department has printed 14,000 copies of the report for distribution in this country and abroad, apparently as part of a Reagan Administration campaign to publicize Soviet activity that is regarded as inimical to Western interests.

In what was appeared to be the opening of this campaign last month, the Defense Department published a 99-page booklet to demonstrate the growth of Soviet military activity.

Today's report said that Soviet operations had sometimes failed "because of ineptitude or because targeted individuals or governments have responded effectively." It said that Soviet measures, however, "have had some success and they remain a major, if little understood, element of Soviet foreign policy."

'Rumors, Insinuation, Lies'

The report said, "The approaches used by Moscow include control of the press in foreign countries; outright and partial forgery of documents; use of rumors, insinuation, altered facts and lies; use of international and local front organizations; clandestine operation of radio stations; exploitation of a nation's academic, political, economic and media figures as collaborators to influence policies of the nation."

In one developing country, according to the report, more than two dozen local journalists were used by the Russians to plant items favorable to the Soviet Union. The Indian magazine Blitz has been used to publish forgeries, falsely accuse Americans of being espionage agents and disseminate Soviet-inspired documents, the report said. In another country, it said, Moscow "used local journalists to exercise substantial control over the contents of two major daily newspapers."

Soviet forgeries are produced and circulated "to mislead foreign governments, media and public opinion" and are better made than in the past, the document said. In one case, it said, Soviet agents, seeking to upset plans for allied modernization of medium-range nuclear weapons, "circulated a forged 'top secret' letter" from Cyrus R. Vance, who was then Secretary of State, to another Western Foreign Minister.

The report said that as part of the "disinformation" campaign, agents of the Soviet Union spread a "false rumor" that the United States was behind the seizure of the Grand Mosque of Mecca in November 1979. In another case, the department said, a Western European country was warned that the United States was planning a coup. Another "particularly egregious" example, it said, was a Tass allegation in August that the United States was behind the death in a plane crash of Brig. Gen. Omar Torrijos Herrera, the Panamanian leader.

The report said that Moscow uses friendship and cultural groups in many countries "to contact people who would not participate in avowedly pro-Soviet or Communist organizations." In addition, it said, the Soviet Union sometimes provides money for groups that did not previously have close association with the Soviet Union, in order to attract a wider political spectrum.

Taking advantage of the Western desire for trade, the Soviet Union uses a variety of "covert economic maneuvers," according to the department. It said a Soviet ambassador in a Western European country had warned a local businessman that his sales to Moscow would suffer if he provided technical aid to China.

In another country, the report said, Soviet agents sought to cause concern over the stability of the dollar by driving up the price of gold.

The document also said the Soviet Union was very active in trying to promote opposition in Western Europe to the modernization of medium-range nuclear weapons and against the neutron warhead, but it asserted that in both cases "not all opposition" was inspired by the Russians.